

MANIKA IAS

PRADHAN MANTRI GARIB KALYAN YOJANA (PMGKAY):

- It is considered as the **world's largest food security** scheme.
- **Aim:** it was launched in 2020 to ensure **sufficient food for the poor and needy** during the coronavirus crisis.
- It was announced as part of the first relief package, announced by the honourable Prime Minister of India.
- It provided each person, who is covered under the National food security Act and Antyodaya yojana with 5 kg grains (wheat or rice) for free, in addition to the 5 kg of subsidised food grain already provided through the Public Distribution System.
- It covers 80 crore beneficiaries.

News: this scheme has been further extended during the second wave of covid-19

PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTE

“The voice of the people is the voice of god; The voice of the Panchayat is the voice of the people,”
-Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

What is Panchayati Raj?

Panchayati Raj institution is the third tier of the government, which aims at ensuring that the voice of the people is heard. Thus ensuring the spirit of democracy in true sense.

History of Panchayati Raj Institute:

- Cholas were the pioneers in formation of local bodies.
- As British government of India realised that for seamless administration, power sharing is important. Thus, in 1884, passed the **Madras Local Boards Act**. By this act, the British formed unions in both small towns and big cities and started appointing members to ensure better administration. This turned out to be successful in improving basic parameters of health and hygiene.
- In 1920, gram panchayat laws were introduced, people of more than 25 years of age were bestowed with the right to vote and choose their panchayat members.

- The panchayati Raj institutions were finally given constitutional status in 1992 by 73rd Amendment in the 1990s, to bring uniformity and mandatory power devolution to panchayati raj institutions in states.

Changes brought in by the 73rd Amendment in the 1990s:

- It Initiated the representative institution of grama sabha, thus establishing direct democracy.
- It allowed for reservation of the downtrodden and women.
- It tried to incorporate consistency in economic development, local body elections once in five years.
- It allowed for the formation of the State Election Commission, Finance Commission, and the power to draft the rules and responsibilities of the Panchayat.
- Administration of the area was transferred to the people, from the politicians and other officials.

Issues faced by the PRI:

- Grama sabhas, today have become more like auction houses for example, the government did not even make an attempt to seek the opinions and the consensus of the people on significant issues such as an eight-lane highway project and even a major hydrocarbon project.
- Women though are elected, however, they barely have a say in the government, majority of them act as a dummy and the decision making is in the hands of the men of the society, so the role of women empowerment has not been fulfilled.
- They lack financial autonomy.
- There is an irregularity in the conduction of sessions of the Panchyati Raj institutions.
- The corporation commissioners are appointed by the State and they face immense challenges if the member of the opposition party takes charge as a mayor this leads to consistent conflict between the two and in turn hamper the process of development.

Steps that can be taken for the improvement of the PRI:

- For trivial and easily resolvable issues, the villages did not have to seek the assistance of the State or the Central governments. They should be resolved in the gram sabha.
- More regular meetings of the Gram Sabha should be held. For example, the state of Tamil Nadu, has made it mandatory that grama sabhas must meet at least four times in a calendar year. Further, they should be convened as and when the necessity arises.
- They should be given more financial autonomy. For example: the state of Kerala has been working toward ensuring the proper use of allotted funds, and ensuring the efficiency of administration and eligible member appointments
- More responsibility needs to be bestowed on the elected member of PRI for example, Tamil Nadu has made the rule that the elected members of the Panchayat are obliged to read out the financial statements and balance sheet to ensure transparency.

- Further, for better performance of the PRI, a state should ensure that they hold area sabhas in cities, form ward committees, hold online Panchayat meetings, ensure decent remuneration to Panchayat chiefs and councillors and also bestow the grama sabha with the power to revoke appointed members and representatives.

VIRAFIN:

News: DCGI of India gave approval to the use of Antiviral drug VIRAFIN, to treat moderate COVID-19 in adults.

Virafin:

- It is an Antiviral drug.
- It helps patients recover faster from the COVID-19.
- It helps in treating chronic hepatitis B and C patients.
- It is being manufactured by Zydus Cadila.
- The trials indicate that the drug was able to control respiratory distress and failure which has been one of the major challenges in treating COVID-19.

DCGI: DRUG CONTROLLER GENERAL OF INDIA

- DCGI comes under the Ministry of Health and family welfare.
- It comes under the gamut of Central Drug Standards Control Organisation (CDSCO).
- It is responsible for approval of licenses of specialised categories of drugs which includes blood and its products, vaccines, IV fluids.
- It further lays down the standards and quality of manufacturing, selling, import and distribution.
- DCGI also acts as an appellate authority in case of any dispute regarding quality of drugs.
- It also prepares and maintains national reference standards.
- It aims to bring uniformity in enforcement of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act.
- It also trains Drug Analysts deputed by State Drug Control Laboratories and other Institutions.